

Japan

Mr. Co-chairs,

Let me first start by congratulating and thanking the Co-chairs on assuming their important positions at this Preparatory Committee for Habitat III. I would also like to congratulate Mr. Joan Clos on his re-election as Director General of UN-Habitat.

~~... the United Nations Habitat since the establishment of the~~
a host country to the regional office in the city of Fukuoka. Furthermore, as Habitat III will be the first UN conference after the adoption of both the Post-2015 Development Agenda and an important agreement under UNFCCC in 2015, we are committed to engaging constructively in the preparatory process toward Habitat III in 2016.

A report of the SDGs OWG was just adopted last week by the GA, who decided that the proposals therein should serve as the main basis for intergovernmental negotiations on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The issue of human settlement is described in a very prominent manner in the report as goal 11: "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable." As stated in the Report of the Secretary-General of the Conference, Habitat III will be a key vehicle for operationalizing the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

Let me touch upon Japan's efforts in regard to Habitat III. The government of Japan has established a National Committee for Habitat III in order to draft our National Report. The committee's interim report was just submitted to the Secretariat. In the report, two main problems are emphasized as new challenges facing Japan in a time of rapid change:

The first challenge is the problem of population. The population of Japan, having peaked in 2008 at 128 million, is projected to decrease to 97 million by 2050, with the share of elderly people reaching 40 percent, to form a super-aged society such as no other country has yet experienced.

The second challenge is how to make cities and local communities more resilient to natural disasters. The Japanese people once again affirmed the dire importance of disaster resilience and disaster risk reduction in the wake of the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011. In this connection, in March 2015, Japan will host the Third

community.

In order to address these new challenges, Japan has published our grand design, which outlines our principles and describes what local communities and cities in Japan should look like by 2050. We are aiming to build a society that will be able to produce greater added value through networking various and diversified local communities, while securing a certain population level in those communities in a time of declining population. We plan to tackle these challenges through close cooperation between national and local governments, businesses and the private sector, and numerous other stakeholders.

In the process leading up to Habitat III, we will be pleased to share with the international community not only our past experiences of rapid economic growth in the 60's and 70's, but also our current aforementioned efforts and experiences in addressing modern challenges in order to contribute to other countries, in particular in Asia-Pacific region, where urbanization has been taking place on a wide scale.

I thank you.